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EAIP Newsletter

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EP on UN Decade for Indigenous People

Proposals for an urgency resolution on the *United Nations International Decade for Indigenous Peoples*, introduced by *Alan MaCartney* and *Christianne Taubira-Delannon* (*European Radical Alliance*) and by *Luciana Castellina* (*United Left*) were not accepted for discussion at the last Plenary Session of the Parliament in Strasbourg on December 15. The proposal requested the Council and the Commission to develop a coherent policy for the Decade in close cooperation with the U.N. coordinator for the Decade, indigenous peoples and to elaborate a communication on indigenous peoples. The proposal further called on the Council and the Commission to include special paragraphs on indigenous peoples in future trade and cooperation agreements between the European Union and third countries, e.g. when the Lomé IV Convention is revised in 1995 and it called on the Council to work out a common position on indigenous peoples to be included in the results of the Summit on Social Development. The proposal also requested the Council to take a common position on the U.N. Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be presented at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in February 1995 and to set up within the COREPER framework an ad hoc working group on indigenous peoples, which should monitor the coordination of activities and policies during the Decade. The proposal called on the Council and the Commission to expand the consultations with indigenous peoples, especially concerning the implementation and possible revision of environmental policies affecting indigenous peoples. Finally, the proposal called on the Council to work out an instrumentarium for the ALA/FED and MED Committees to integrate consultation and participation with indigenous peoples in decisions on funding development projects. Both MEPs, as well as others in the PSE (Social-Democrats) group have announced to reintroduce their proposals for the January session which is being held from 16 to 20 of January 1995.

Coca and Commission's Drug Action Plan

The *European Commission* published on June 23, 1994, a proposal for a new *European Action Plan on Drugs*, which contains policy proposals to reduce illegal drug production and trafficking in developing countries. The communication is now being reviewed by the European Parliament.

The *Catholic Institute for International Relations* published a document with general observations and recommendations to the six "tools" which are either used, supported or contemplated by the European Union and its member states, in relation to developing countries and mentioned in the European Action Plan. In relation to crop eradication the document recommends that in areas where drug linked crops are grown by peasant producers, the EU should support crop eradication only in the context of negotiated agreements between farmers and third country governments, providing for voluntary eradication following the establishment of viable economic alternatives for the farmers. Under no circumstances should the EU support eradication methods which risk damage to the environment. In relation to alternative development, the EU should support only those alternative development programs where legitimate representation of the target population are integrally involved with the design and implementation of the programs. The EU should seek to address the adverse impact on peasant agriculture in general of low and fluctuating commodity prices and they should seek to prevent subsidised exports of EU-produce from undermining rural economies, and should work towards the complete elimination of foodstuffs which can be produced locally in third countries affected by drug linked crops. In relation to the trade preferences, the EU should consider an extension of the preferences on agricultural goods beyond the recently agreed, at least in the case of goods certifiably produced by small peasants, guaranteeing a fairer price to small scale producers. In relation to the strengthening of the law should the EU seek the opinion of independent national and international human rights and judicial bodies as to the implications for human and civil rights of a country's drug-control legislation, before granting drug-control assistance. Cultivation of drug linked crops by peasant producers should not be punished in third countries. The EU should not offer security assistance for drug control purposes to countries where there is evidence that drug law enforcement forces are responsible for human rights abuses or corruption. In particular, the EU should support the involvement of independent national human rights organisations in monitoring the use of drug-control assistance. Concerning the conditioning of aid to drug control performance should the EU develop clear criteria for conditioning explicitly drug control assistance on drug control performance. These criteria should include evidence that the government of the third country is taking concrete steps to tackle impediments to drug control such as corruption among government employees, particularly in the judiciary, police and military forces and human rights violations by law enforcement bodies. Finally, the document recommends that the EU should study carefully the proposals from Bolivia and Peru that coca be depenalised to open the way for the development and marketing of traditional and non-traditional coca products.

NGO declaration on Desertification

An international NGO conference has been held in Brussels on November 28 - 30 on the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The NGOs attending the Brussels conference committed themselves to improve the communication exchange and financial support between northern and southern NGO's with the aim of sharing information, technical skills and

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scientific knowledge as a basis for common lobbying activities, awareness raising campaigns and field implementation of the Convention. They urged the European Union, its Member States and other donor countries 1) to support NGO's in their efforts to build up an International NGO Network on Desertification as a mechanism to facilitate communication and consultation among NGO's worldwide; 2) to help NGO's and governments of affected countries in developing methods and establishing mechanisms for the consultation with local communities; 3) to support the establishment and operation of National Desertification Funds that are managed by NGO's and relevant government agencies, to channel financial resources rapidly and efficiently to the local level. NGO representatives in the management of these funds should be selected by a broad section of the NGO community through a transparent consultation process according to the Brussels NGO declaration.
While the NGO's also urged the E.U. to initiate the implementation of the Urgent Action Plan for Africa, several *Tuareg* representatives at the *Tuareg Hearing* organised by the EP's Development Commission however, complained that the international aid is being used to increase the repression against the *Tuareg* resistance.

Manifestation for East Timor

On November 23, some dozens of European officials manifested before the *German Mission* in Brussels to draw the attention of the *German Presidency* to the situation in *East Timor*. They submitted to the representative of the Mission a letter in which they demanded the European Union 1) to defend the right of the people of East Timor to participate in negotiations concerning its own future; 2) to request the Indonesian government for the unconditional release of *Xanana Gusmão*, the former leader of the Timorese resistance; 3) the immediate cessation of arm sales to Indonesia by European governments. The political director of the German Mission engaged himself to communicate to all the member states the letter and the demands that were directed to him. In case that due to a lack of unanimity, the European Union could not express itself on the issue, he also engaged himself to suggest bilateral steps to the different countries.

Winner of Rights Livelihood Award visits E.P.

Dr. *H. Sudarshan*, one of the winners of the 1994 *Right Livelihood Award*, visited the European Parliament during its December session in Strasbourg. Dr. *Sudarshan* has been awarded for the work that he and his organisation, the *Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra* (VGKK) have been doing for the *Soliga* people in *Karnataka*, in the south of *India*. *VGKK* has been active there since 1981, in particular in the field of health and education. Dr. *Sudarshan* met with *Social Democrat* and *Green group* members of the European Parliament. He asked for their support for the major issues *VGKK* is working on: the incursion of mining companies on *Soliga* land; the fight against mega-dams and wildlife sanctuaries which impose resettlement on indigenous peoples; a new forest bill which will have negative impact on the indigenous peoples and finally the need for projects for the production and commercialisation of secondary forest products. He stressed the importance of the preservation of the forests in which the indigenous peoples are living. A comparative study about the health situation of indigenous peoples living in, on the periphery and outside the forests, has proven that those living in the forest have a far better health condition. He also expressed the view that support should be given in the first place to small, grassroots organisations.

ASI Report on Burma

Anti Slavery International recently published a report on the situation of ethnic groups in *Burma*. The report contains a historical review and a review of the different ethnic groups and indigenous peoples in *Burma*, followed by an analyses of the military rule and the human rights violations in *Burma* and the effects of these on the land and the peoples. *Anti Slavery International*, a member organisation of the *European Alliance with Indigenous Peoples* believes that the international community has a role to play in encouraging the Burmese authorities to take these measures. The organisation recognises that some may feel that they do not want to have operations in *Burma* until there have been significant humanitarian, political and economic changes. But for those who wish to follow an approach of "constructive engagement", inspired by the trade opportunities such as apparently the ASEAN countries and the *European Union*, ASI suggests them to use certain guidelines: contracts and agreements should state that there must be no abuse of human rights in the implementation of the projects; indigenous peoples, ethnic minority groups and local communities should be consulted about projects that affect them and they should be encouraged and assisted to participate in their preparation and implementation; advice and assistance should be made available to indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities which may need assistance to strengthen their ability to protect and further their interests as a group; programmes should be implemented to seek to redress the imbalance resulting from inequalities in economic development and discrimination against indigenous peoples and minorities in the past.

European Parliament on Sudan

On 15 December 1994, the *European Parliament* voted a resolution on the human rights situation in *Sudan*. The Parliament expressed its regret that the Sudanese government has so far failed to facilitate any mediation for a peaceful settlement of the civil war crisis in southern *Sudan* and is shocked by the indiscriminate bombings of civilian targets in southern *Sudan* by the Sudanese air force during the dry season offensive in 1994 in violation of the *Geneva conventions*. The *Parliament* condemned all acts of terror committed in *Sudan*, whether by government forces or rebel factions and condemned the Government of *Sudan* for the continuing civil war in the south and for the killing, massacres, torture and other human rights abuses that it inflicts on the civilian population of south *Sudan* and on displaced people throughout the country. It also deplores the conflict between the two rival factions of the *SPLA* that is causing additional suffering, hunger and refugees. The *Parliament* called to the *government of Sudan* to put an end to the use of detention without charge or trial, torture and ill-treatment in secret detention centres and to release without delay all political prisoners. In its resolution the *European Parliament* called on the international community to reinforce the sanctions against the *Khartoum* regime, to bring pressure to bear the *Sudanese Government* to stop the massacre of its southern population and to respect human rights, including freedom of religion, throughout the entire country. The *Parliament* called on the Member States to extend their arms embargo on *Sudan* to include the transfer of military, security and police equipment, intelligence, technology, personnel and training, and called on the *Commission* and the *Council* to establish effective mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the *Union's* established arms embargo against *Sudan* by individual Member States